A healthy transfusion of service from Wyndgate and Dr. Ruxin

Executive snapshot
By Allison Long, Associate Editor

Meeting standards: Our company supports important standard-setting initiatives on multiple levels — with involvement for more than a decade with ISBT 128 technical advisory groups responsible for defining the labeling standard and in ongoing education regarding it. We have provided supporting software solutions for seven years. There is great value for the industry in standardizing blood-component labeling, so we designed those capabilities very early into our products. Next, we have helped customers face the monumental task of implementation. The deadline is aggressive, and many blood centers and transfusion services have limited resources. Education about the standard is crucial, so we developed an online education series. Some clients are asking for additional help to manage their ISBT 128 projects, so we will likely offer hands-on project management in those situations.

Trends in blood banking: In the 1970s, the emphasis was on component therapy. During the 1980s, attention focused on infectious-disease testing in the wake of HIV. In the 1990s, attention was drawn to information systems in light of new 510(k) requirements for blood-bank software. The immediate trend is certainly automation for blood-bank tests, particularly pre-transfusion testing for blood types, antibody screens, and cross matches. The next trend seems to be positive patient identification (PPID) or bedside bar-coding systems. Many of our customers have already implemented PPID solutions, and we have interfaced them to our transfusion-service software. This is likely to be a growing focus in the future, given the regulatory attention around transfusion safety. Much of which still relies on manually matching blood products to patient armbands. As this trend continues, we are poised to incorporate these processes into our management software and interface these systems to our Vein-to-Vein tracking.

Significant blood-banking developments: Declines in the national blood supply will be exacerbated when transfusion demands grow as our population ages, especially with new cancer therapies that can require sophisticated blood-component therapy. Addressing this challenge most directly is the growth in automated collections — typically using apheresis technology — which allows multiple blood products to be collected in one sitting. This approach removes only those products needed for blood-inventory management, avoiding a build-up of byproducts not always needed for transfusion. Donors who consent to automated collections can donate more frequently, thereby increasing availability of blood. We believe automated collections is a vanguard of technologies to come. We have built special bidirectional interfaces to automated collection-management systems so that our customers can take full advantage of benefits this technology offers.

Collaboration in blood banking: In working on a next-generation system and future ElDorado product line to accompany SafeTrace and SafeTrace Tx, we created a technology workgroup similar in concept to the original consortium that collaborated with us to create SafeTrace. The group consists of clients and non-clients from the United States and Canada who work with our development team to ensure that industry’s needs are met as we scope and design the new products. We rely on our clients to guide development, as their business is our business. The mutual trust and collaboration between our company and our clients allow us to focus on what matters most — high-quality software backed by exceptional service.

Attracting the best and brightest: About one-fifth of our workforce has degrees in clinical laboratory science (CLS). Most are certified in medical technology (MT); several are certified specialists in blood-banking technology. This mix allows us to swiftly address concerns during product implementation. Our clients can rest easy during production when they need client support, as they can converse with knowledgeable personnel who understand their issues and concerns. Throughout the year, we sponsor events on behalf of our clients. Our training classes are P.A.C.E.-accredited to make it easier to obtain continuing education credit for their employees. We are active in the local community near our headquarters and maintain frequent contact with local MT colleges as well as training programs at our nearby regional blood center.

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